

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke*

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THE CHRIST

O SON of Man, our Hero strong and tender,
Whose servants are the brave in all the earth,
Our living sacrifice to thee we render,
Who sharest all our sorrow, all our mirth.

O feet so strong to climb the path of duty,
O lips divine that taught the words of truth,
Kind eyes that marked the lilies in their beauty,
And heart that kindled at the zeal of youth;

Lover of children, boyhood's inspiration,
Of all mankind the Servant and the King,
O Lord of joy, and hope, and consolation,
To thee our fears and joys and hopes we bring.

Not in our failures only, and our sadness,
We seek thy presence, Comforter and Friend,
O rich man's guest, be with us in our gladness!
O poor man's mate, our lowliest tasks attend!

—*Frank Fletcher.*

BEING A GOOD CIPHER

ONE who was asked why he called most men ciphers answered aptly enough: "Because they count for nothing ahead of a leader, but a great deal behind him." That was letting a good many of us who seem to count for little down rather easily, with an implied, if doubtful compliment. Six oughts in a row amount to just exactly nothing at all. But six oughts, with the dollar sign and a one before them stand for a fortune of a million dollars. We should remember that saying about ciphers when the discouraged hour arrives and we are tempted to think that we amount to nothing at all and that the exacting world would be well rid of our presence in it.

We are all ciphers, we do not count at all, in the reckonings of certain other men. They never

heard of us and would not be interested if they did. Or they dislike and would forget us. But not one of us is a cipher in the reckonings of God. Or at least we are only potentially negligible in that high care and by our own deliberate and persistent self-exclusion from the mighty sum of humanity to which He gives the value of His own eternal and incalculable worth. We are not ciphers in the affairs of our own State and Nation, unless we choose to be, disdaining all coöperation or interest except that which the police and the tax gatherers force upon us. A political cipher is one who will not take the trouble to vote, and last November's election tells us how many of them there are even yet in spite of all the effort to get them to the ballot box.

Being a good cipher means, then, much more than self-depreciation (which is never good). It means making our own selves count to the utmost by following a leader and adding all the force of our own personality to make his leading possible and successful. We count most, every time, in combination. Power is not at first delivered by the raindrops that fall each on its own spot of the ground. It is delivered when those raindrops are gathered in a river, fall from a height and together turn the wheels of a turbine to produce the electricity that lights our cities and works our mills. The world wants leaders. It cannot do without them. Without the right sort of leaders there is little or nothing of value that can be done. The one-mule farmer of the South, who works an acre of cotton and just keeps his family along, is a leader. But what can a leader do without those who will give themselves to follow him? Alone he is only one; but with the ciphers that will add themselves to him his value to the community mounts enormously and becomes great at last.

I must not press too far this suggestive metaphor of the digit and the ciphers, though it opens a door for thought into a wide realm of joy and

opportunity. When you have the right leader, it is happiness to forget yourself and follow. One way to be useless or trouble-making is to insist always on being first yourself. To be a good follower is also being in the path of your own advancement, as well as of your own joy. For it is from the ranks of the followers that the leaders in great undertakings are selected. The work outlives the man. A great inventor or administrator dies, and a successor is sought among those who have worked with him or had successful experience in administrative work elsewhere. Jesus himself seems to suggest in the stories of the talents and the pounds that earth's experiences are used by God himself as a school for heaven's responsibilities.

I do not say that it is always easy to be a good follower and to subordinate one's own desires and convictions. Leaders are not always wise, and blind following into some bog of recognized mistakes is not always possible to a self-respecting man. But one must be sure just here that in the criticism or withdrawal there is no element of jealousy or envy. The man who works against his leader merely for his own selfish interest or advancement deserves the name of traitor. We must define with care the limits of our own authority and responsibility and seek to keep within them. That is part of the discipline of life and part of our training for responsibility.

To be a good cipher means withdrawals, refrainings and withholdings. The opposite vices in this field are intrusions, meddlings, interferences and carping criticisms. And these grow out of that great folly of thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. When our fingers itch to meddle; when we are tempted to intrude; when the fault-finding word leaps to the ready tongue, we are in danger of the sin and impertinent folly of interfering with what is none of our concern, and we may fall into the valley of humiliation, not the valley of humility, which is an altogether different locality. A little authority goes quickly to the head of half-trained followers as it did with John when he came to Jesus saying: "Master, we saw one casting out evil spirits in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him because he followeth not us."

We are often driven to a choice of followings and the danger of indecision is that we may be left marking time at the parting of the roads. The ways of the world about us are not always favorable to our choosing. It needs a stalwart will to be a good follower of the better leadership. The old call sounds, insistent and imperative down the centuries: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!" And the warning follows: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." To fall between

two stools of allegiance; to be neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm; to try to serve God with the right hand and pleasure with the left—how the images of vacillation multiply! But to be lukewarm is to become a cipher indeed and to forfeit one's own self-respect as well as the favor of God and the opportunity of service. That is the way not merely of perpetual inefficiency, but also of perpetual unhappiness.

We must not mistake the situation here. The way of humility is not the way of an unthinking self-effacement, but the deliberate selection of the proper thing to do in all the circumstances. It may be wise merely to get ourselves out of the way of someone who has a better claim or duty to take action. It may be wise to act; but to subordinate our action to the plan or wish of others, wisdom not infrequently will require us to follow where we might like to lead or to do the things we would not of our own motion wish to do. There may be, and in fact there often is, something heroic in following or even in merely standing on one side to let the man who is in possession lead. So it comes back to be a question of good will at last—or, if you choose to call it so, of charity which "envieth not; which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil." This is the true meaning of that poverty of spirit to which the kingdom itself is promised. And in the kingdom we ciphers add ourselves to the unfailing wealth of God by which many shall be made rich. For God will do nothing for men without the co-partnership of man in all His work.

It is not well, I think, for many of us to be as greedy as we are for great authority and responsibility. There is discipline, and there ought to be repose, in the unloading of our hands. The main thing is to have the work accomplished, and not that we should have the planning or the praise. The leadership and applause can wait; but not the self-devotion. Let me quote in closing from an address on "The Value of Art to the People," by Otto H. Kahn, which makes it clear how the good cipher adds itself to the wealth of the community and wins a wise man's recognition: "But there is another kind of heroism—that of the many millions of average men and women who, in meeting the tasks of the workaday world, practice the brave and simple philosophy of righteous living; who uncheered by comrades, unstimulated by the ardor of battle, unrewarded by renown, contribute to the common cause daily acts of self-discipline and self-denial, of honor and of duty and of faith. It is one of the noblest achievements in the upward struggle of humanity through the ages—this habitual, homely, ingrained heroism of the rank and file, of 'the unknown soldier' of the battle of life."—*The Boston Transcript*.

MOSQUITOES AND FLIES

WE do not know what new enemies we may have to fight during the coming summer, but we are quite sure that we shall not fail to meet our old foes—mosquitoes, house flies, and all the usual insect pests. Inasmuch as it has been proved beyond all question that these insects are responsible for the spread of many dreaded diseases, we no longer have the excuse of ignorance if we allow them to multiply round us. In the tropical zones the mosquito carries yellow fever from one human being to another; in the temperate zone it carries malaria. Wherever men succeed in exterminating the insect these disorders die out.

The people of the more civilized parts of the world are paying much attention to this exterminating process and are spending large sums of money, with the result that in many localities the mosquito is becoming rare, much to the improvement of the general health, to say nothing of the general comfort. The worst of it is that a community of conscientious people is more or less at the mercy of their slack neighbors. It is discouraging to exterminate one's own pests only to have the wind drive a flock over from the next community. We must labor, therefore, to educate people morally as well as mentally in these matters and try to convince them that duty calls as clearly as self-interest.

The house fly is so notoriously unclean that the instincts of all good housekeepers are against him, irrespective of the question of health; but if all women were made to look at food through a microscope after flies had been on it, they would be still more particular. Investigators have proved by careful computation that one fly sometimes harbors more than a million bacteria.

The time to begin the fight against these horrors is the very early summer, when the first warm weather brings out the hibernating flies. Destroy each one ruthlessly then and there. Explain the danger of them clearly to children of every age, and show them a magnified picture of a house fly with the accumulated dirt on its legs. Preach aloud till everyone knows that flies spell typhoid fever, many other intestinal disorders, and especially the dysentery that carries off so many young children in the hot weather.—*The Youth's Companion*.

POT LIKKER

Do not, dear reader, become excited. When we mention pot likker—purists might insist on calling it "pot liquor," but not we—we make no reference whatsoever to anything drinkable that might be in contravention of the Volstead Act.

We would sing the praises of something almost forgotten in these days of food shot from guns, food predigested, food packed in cartons.

We refer to the delectable liquor that our grandmothers knew how to conserve, but which most housewives now put down the kitchen sink. Our grandmothers knew nothing of vitamins or carbohydrates, or of mineral salts, but they did know that pot likker contained those things vital to the building up of bone and muscle and brain.

There is nothing mysterious about pot likker. It is the water in which vegetables are boiled or stewed, sometimes, not always, blended with the juices stewed from meat. It simmers and boils in the stock pot on the back of the old kitchen stove, its savory odors permeating the atmosphere and causing that inner longing that cannot be described in words. It gathers in and holds in storage all the valuable properties boiled out of the vegetables, awaiting the time when they may be taken into the human system to its physical, moral and mental betterment.

A delectable, life-giving, life-sustaining beverage. Marse Henry Watterson was wont to declare that pot likker enabled the Confederate Army to fight against overwhelming odds for four years, instead of going down to defeat inside of six months.

You drink it and feel the urge to sing, to dance, to rejoice in new vigor and be exceeding glad. It holds out hope to the dyspeptic. It promises surcease from the ever-pressing problem of something new to tempt the appetite.—*The Omaha Bee*.

THE STAR

TWINKLE, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light—
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveller in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark;
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark, blue sky you keep,
Yet often through my windows peep;
For you never shut your eye
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveller in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

—Jane Taylor.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.
Tel. Granite 1140

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send those to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICES

Please read and follow the suggestions.

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

When correspondents move to a new address, notice should be sent either to our headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or to those persons who have been sending books and magazines.

It is necessary to state positively that the Cheerful Letter Exchange is not a "clothing bureau" and not a "charitable" society in the usual sense of the word. We do not undertake to send correspondents money, clothing or household goods. Letters asking for that sort of assistance cannot receive attention. Letters not signed cannot be printed.

Many people do care for just the kind of friendly service for which we are organized. We limit our efforts to them and their wishes.

OFFERS

The Waltham Cheerful Letter Branch offers the following music. Address Mrs. F. A. Stearns 36 Harris Street, Waltham, Mass.

The Crescendo—a monthly publication devoted to the interests of harp, mandolin, guitar, and banjo; about 2 dozen copies, 1919-1922.

Package of music for male quartette, mostly church music; some secular.

6. Mrs. Lee M. Kilby, Rugby, Va., R. 1, Box 69, has been very ill with pneumonia for six weeks and will appreciate some cheery reading. She is grateful for what has been sent.

7. Miss Effie Tuggle, Elamsville, Va., needs a dictionary and Bible.

8. Mrs. T. Iverson Murphy, Coolidge, Ga., R. 2, Box 30, has a hard cross to bear and will appreciate reading.

9. Mrs. Jessie C. Broadaway, Polkton, N. C., R. 3, asks for story books for her three boys, aged 9, 6, and 4 years.

10. Miss Ella May, Lansing, N. C., would like reading and cards.

11. *Good Housekeeping* is asked for by (Mrs.) Bessie McFarland, Manchester, N. C.

12. Miss Ellen Lowell, Elamsville, Va. R. 1, living in the country, will be very glad of good magazines or books.

13. Will you please accept our thanks for books and magazines we have received from you since I wrote three years ago. We sincerely hope the Cheerful Letter friends will send us books and magazines the present year, 1925. I would especially like *White Flag* by Gene Stratton

REQUESTS

1. Mrs. Sarah Spears, Marshville, N. C., R. 5, living in the country, will be glad of reading suitable for a woman beyond middle age.

2. Mrs. Philip Whitlock, R. 4, Floyd, Va., and her daughter, will be glad of reading, cards, and quilt scraps.

3. Miss Belva Church and her mother at Goodwill, W. Va., ask for good reading.

4. Mrs. Eula Holland, Sanville, Va., R. 1, is in need of a Teacher's Bible.

5. *Webster's Dictionary* and the book called *The Lone Star* are asked for by (Miss) Ina Witt, Epperson, Tenn.

Porter. My three girls would appreciate scraps of lace and ribbon (ages, Lillian 17 years, Louise 10 years, Eugenia 8 years). We will pass on all reading sent us to others in need of reading. Our boys' ages are: William 15 years, Richard 14 years, Albert 12 years, Russell 6 years, and Leonard 4 years. (Mrs.) Kate E. Gilley, R. 3, Spencer, Va.

14. I am a little girl, eleven years old and in the sixth grade. This year my teacher has asked us to read a large number of books and as I have n't many of them I would appreciate it if you would send me any of these: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *Story of a Bad Boy* by Aldrich, *The Jungle Book* by Kipling, *Hosien School Boy* by Kipling, *Tanglewood Tales* by Hawthorne, *Lobo, Rag, and Vixon* by Seton, *Heroes Every Child Should Know*. I would appreciate this very much, as I need the books this opening. Helen M. Hicks, care of Mrs. A. E. Hicks, Amherst, Va.

15. I have a sister ten years old who has been crippled for five years and cannot walk. She would appreciate story books, papers, and cards, or anything to pass away the time; for she cannot go to school. Address: (Miss) Vildred Griffith, Woolwine, Va.

16. We are three children living with our parents in a mountain country, forty-five miles from the railroad: Myrtle, a girl, thirteen years of age. Herman, a boy, age seven years and Bobbie, a girl, of three years. Myrtle is in the fifth grade and Herman is in the second grade. We would appreciate books, papers, magazines and cards, and also bits of knitting, crochet or embroidery thread. Our address is care of Mrs. C. M. Kingsley, Copeland, Ark.

17. I will try and write my thanks for the books and quilt scraps received the past year, and would like to be remembered the coming year with the reading and quilt scraps and house-plant cuttings for my blind girl, who will be at home this summer. She is a great lover of flowers of all kinds, so I hope to hear from some friend through the *Cheerful Letter*. (Mrs.) S. M. Lively, Copeland, Ark.

18. Mrs. J. R. Bryant, Ronda, N. C., would like very much to receive *The Story Girl* by L. M. Montgomery, for her daughter.

19. Mrs. Victoria Sylvester, Bayou Chene, La. has a daughter of 14 and son 17 at home. She asks for reading for the family. Mrs. Sylvester has been a member of the Exchange for nearly thirty years.

20. It has been quite a while since I have received any reading from the *Cheerful Letter* friends. I would be glad of some more—a good book for the children, ages from 7 to 15 years, and any kind of good reading for myself. I have been in poor health for a long time, and I cannot do any work that is hard. Any kind of quilt scraps would be thankfully received. I thank the friends for their past favors. (Mrs.) C. J. Nolen, Elamsville, Va.

21. Mrs. W. W. Rose, Gray, N. C., a widow with six children, George 9, Ruby and Ruth, twins 8, Vincent 5, Edna 3, Roy 2 years. She will appreciate reading, cards and scraps.

22. Miss Esther A. Ford, Winterport, Maine, asks again this spring for flower seeds, especially sweet peas.

23. Miss Elsie Harrington, Swatara, Minn., asks for a Bible with large print, and the *Delineator* or *Woman's Home Companion*. She sends warm thanks for past favors.

24. Miss Elah Jessup, Nettle Ridge, Va., would like *Tempest* and *Sunshine* and *Lena Rivers*.

25. Mrs. Margaret Hanschild, Aetna, Kans., asks for songs suitable for little girls (ages six to nine) to sing, also for grown-ups, just anything *except* jazz.

26. Miss Meda Wright, Rex, Van Buren Co., Ark., Box 57, living ten miles from the nearest town, will be grateful for any of Harold Bell Wright's or Zane Grey's books. She has two sisters and two brothers, the oldest a boy of fourteen who would like reading. The books will be passed along after reading.

27. Mrs. J. H. Walker, Powellton, W. Va., whose hands are full with five children and hard work, would be grateful for cards and reading for the family. Work is very dull and so she helps by doing laundry.

28. I am a widow with ten children—five boys and five girls, one boy and one girl are dead. My husband has been dead about ten years. I am sixty-six years old and I am very weak as I have had rheumatism for about twelve years, and have to stay in bed part of the time. I can knit, crochet, and piece quilts, and I would be very glad if someone would send me quilt pieces, crochet thread and good papers and books to read. I am a member of the Baptist church; my minister is Rev. J. G. L. Hash, Endicott, Va. (Mrs.) J. W. Shortt, R. 1, Box 34, Floyd, Va.

29. I want to thank the Cheerful Letter friends for the many magazines and quilt scraps I received this winter. I tried to send them all letters and thank them, but a few of the names were so dim that I could n't make them out; so I want to thank those that have failed to hear from me. It is springtime here now; peach trees are in bloom, birds singing, and buds swelling, and all we farmers and families are busy as bees. I always steal a little time at noon to read while my husband is resting. Another lady and I have been staying by ourselves while our husbands have gone to the railroad after fertilizer to put under cotton. It will take them four days and if it was n't for our reading matter we would get lonesome. (Mrs.) W. J. Loudermilk, Copeland, Ark.

Change of Address

Mrs. Mattie Alger from Twin Falls, to Files, Idaho.

Mrs. Ellen Atchley from Ebb, Ark., to Gould, R. 2, Oklahoma.

Mrs. W. S. Tomlison, is now at Macon, Ga., c/o Capitol Box Co.

Mrs. Pearl Couick from Great Falls, S. C., to Ansonville, N. C., Box 61.

Mrs. Emma Mitchell is now at Lubbock, Texas, R. 2, Box 58.

Mrs. Bessie Hamilton of Bowie, Texas has removed and left no address.

NOTICE

Quilt scraps will be sent to any one who will pay the postage. Address: Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

A PRAYER

DEAR Lord—kind Lord!
 Gracious Lord! I pray
 Thou wilt look on all I love
 Tenderly today!
 Weed their hearts of weariness;
 Scatter every care
 Down a wake of angel wings
 Winnowing the air.

Bring unto the sorrowing
 All release from pain;
 Let the life of laughter
 Overflow again;
 And with all the needy,
 O divide, I pray,
 This vast treasure of content
 That is mine today.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

IN the beautiful Italian city of Venice there dwelt in former times a Jew by the name of Shylock, who had grown rich by lending money at high interest to citizens and merchants. No one liked Shylock, he was so hard and so cruel in his dealings; but perhaps none felt such an abhorrence of his character as a young man of Venice named Antonio.

This hatred was amply returned by the Jew; for Antonio was so kind to people in distress that he would lend them money without taking any interest at all. Besides, he used to reproach Shylock for his hard dealings, when they chanced to meet. Apparently the Jew bore such reproaches calmly enough; but could you have looked into his heart, you would have seen it filled with longing for revenge.

Antonio was greatly loved by his fellow countrymen; but dearest of all his friends was Bassanio, a young man of high rank, though possessed of but small fortune.

One day Bassanio came to tell Antonio that he was about to marry a beautiful maiden, the heiress of one of the richest and grandest men in the whole land; but to meet the expense of wedding such a distinguished bride he needed the loan of three thousand ducats.

Just at that time Antonio had not the money to lend his friend, but he was expecting home some ships laden with rare merchandise from Eastern countries and worth vast sums, so he readily offered to borrow the required sum of Shylock upon the security of these vessels and their splendid cargo.

Together they repaired to the Jewish money-lender; and Antonio asked for three thousand ducats, to be repaid from the merchandise contained in his ships. Shylock remembered now all that Antonio had said to criticize him. For a few moments he remained silent; then he said:

"Signor, you have called me a dog, and an unbeliever. It is for these courtesies I am to lend you money?"

"Lend it me not as a friend," said Antonio; "rather lend it to me as an enemy, so that you may the better exact the penalty if I fail."

Then Shylock, seemed to feel more kindly.

"I would be friends with you," he said. "I will forget your treatment of me, and supply your wants without taking interest for my money."

Antonio was, of course, very much surprised at such words. But Shylock repeated them; only requiring that they should go to some lawyer, before whom—merely as a whimsical form—Antonio should swear, that if by a certain day he did not repay the money, he would forfeit a pound of flesh, cut from any part of his body which the money-lender might choose.

"Certainly I will sign this bond," said Antonio.

But Bassanio now interfered, declaring that never should Antonio put his name to such a bond for his sake. Yet the young merchant insisted, for he said he was quite sure of his ships returning before the day of payment.

Meanwhile Shylock was listening eagerly; and feigning surprise, he exclaimed: "Oh, what suspicious people these are! It is because of their own hard dealings that they doubt the truth of others. Look here, my lord Bassanio! Suppose Antonio fails in his bond, what profit would it be to me to exact the penalty? A pound of man's flesh is not the value of a pound of beef or mutton! I offer friendship, that I may buy his favor. If he will take it, so; if not, good-bye."

Bassanio still mistrusted the wisdom of the queer bargain. However, he could not convince his friend that it should not be made, and Antonio signed the bond, thinking it was only a joke, as Shylock said.

The fair lady whom Bassanio was to marry lived near Venice; and when her lover confessed that, though of high birth, he had no fortune to lay at her feet, Portia prettily said that she wished herself a thousand times more fair, and ten thousand times more rich, so that she herself might be less unworthy of so honorable a lover. Then, declaring that she gave herself to be in all things directed and governed by him, she presented Bassanio with a ring as a sign of her promise.

Overcome with joy at her gracious loveliness, young Bassanio took the gift, vowing that he would never, never part with it.

Gratiano in attendance upon his master during this interview; and after wishing Bassanio and the fair maiden joy, he begged leave to be married also, saying that Nerissa, the maid of Portia, had promised to be his own wife, should her mistress wed Bassanio.

At this moment a messenger entered, bringing tidings from Antonio. Bassanio, reading them, turned so pale that Portia was alarmed and asked him what was so dreadfully amiss.

"Oh, sweet Portia, here are the most unpleasant words that ever blotted paper!" he said. "When I spoke of my love, I freely told you I had no wealth, save the pure blood that runs in my veins; but I should have told you that I had less than nothing, being in debt."

And then Bassanio gave the history of Antonio's agreement with Shylock. He next read the letter which had been brought, a letter from the merchant of Venice, his generous friend Antonio. The letter said: "Dear Bassanio: My ships are lost; my bond to the Jew is forfeited; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, I could wish to see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure. If your love for me does not persuade you to come, let not my letter do so."

Portia promptly declared that such a friend should not lose so much as a hair of his head by

the fault of Bassanio, and that gold must be found to pay the money. In order to make all her possessions his, she would even marry her lover that very day, so that he might start at once to help Antonio. So in all haste the young couple were wedded, and also their attendants, Gratiano and Nerissa. Bassanio immediately set out for Venice, where he found his friend in prison.

The time of payment was past, and now the Jew would not accept the money offered him; nothing would do now, he said, but the pound of flesh! A day was appointed for the strange case to be heard and decided by the Duke of Venice; and meanwhile the two friends must wait in anxiety; in horrible dread.

Portia had spoken cheerily to her husband when he left her, but her own heart began to sink when she was alone; and so strong was her desire to save one who had been so true a friend to her Bassanio, that she determined to go to Venice and speak in defence of Antonio.

There was in the city a counsellor-at-law named Bellario, who was related to Portia; to him she wrote, telling the case, and begging that he would send her such robes as a lawyer would wear in court, because she had resolved to go herself in that disguise, to defend the prisoner at his trial. The messenger returned, bringing her the court-room robes, and also much advice as to how she should act in the character of a young lawyer. Nerissa also dressed herself like a young man, and the two girls set forth on their errand, arriving at Venice on the day of the trial.

The Duke and the noble senators were already in court, when a note from Bellario was brought in saying that illness prevented him from pleading for Antonio; but he begged that the young and learned counsellor Balthasar (for so he called Portia) might be allowed to take his place. The Duke marvelled at the extremely youthful appearance of this stranger, but granted Bellario's request; and Portia, disguised in flowing robes and a large wig, such as the lawyers wore, gazed round the court, where she saw Bassanio standing beside his friend.

The importance of her work gave Portia courage; Antonio's written promise was acknowledged, but she began to plead with Shylock, telling him of the beauty of human mercy:

The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath; it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.

But Shylock's only answer was, that he should insist upon the penalty. Portia asked if it was not clear that Antonio could pay the sum. Bassanio then publicly offered the payment of the

three thousand ducats, but cruel Shylock refused it, declaring that he would take nothing but the promised pound of flesh.

Bassanio was now horribly torn by sorrow for his good friend, and asked the learned young counsellor to "wrest the law a little."

"That must not be. There is no power in Venice can alter a decree established," said Portia. Shylock, hearing the strange lawyer say this, believed he had the victory and exclaimed: "O wise young judge! How do I honor thee!"

He never guessed what was coming, when the young counsellor gravely asked to look at the bond. Portia read it, and declared that the Jew was indeed lawfully entitled to the pound of flesh; but once more she begged him to take the offered money, and be merciful.

It was in vain to talk to Shylock of mercy. He began to sharpen a knife; and then Portia asked Antonio if he had anything to say. He could say little, but prepared to take leave of his well-beloved Bassanio, bidding him tell the bride at home how he had died for friendship's sake. In his grief, Bassanio cried out that, dearly as he loved his newly wedded wife, even she could not be more precious to him than Antonio's life; and that he would lose her and all he had, could it avail to satisfy the cruel creditor.

"Your wife would give you little thanks for that, if she were by to hear you make that offer," said Portia; not at all angry, however, with her husband for loving such a noble friend well enough to say this.

Then Bassanio's servant Gratiano exclaimed that he too had a young wife whom he dearly loved, but whom he wished in heaven if, by being there, she could soften the heart of Shylock. At this, Nerissa—who, in a clerk's garb, was by Portia's side—said, "It is well you wish this be- hind her back!"

But Shylock was impatient to be revenged on his victim, and cried out that time was being lost. So Portia asked if the scales were in readiness; and if some surgeon were near, lest Antonio should bleed to death.

"It is not so named in the bond," said Shylock.

"It were good you did so much for charity," returned Portia.

But charity and mercy were nothing to Shylock. He sharpened his knife, and called upon Antonio to prepare. But Portia bade him tarry; there was still something more to be considered. Though the law, indeed, gave him a pound of flesh, it did not give him one single drop of blood; and if, in cutting off the flesh, he shed one drop of Antonio's blood, his possessions were confiscated by the law to the State of Venice!

A murmur of applause ran through the court at the wise thought of the young counsellor; for it was clearly impossible for the flesh to be cut with-

out the shedding of blood, and therefore Antonio was safe.

Shylock then said that, on the whole, he would take the money Bassanio had offered; and Bassanio cried out gladly, "Here it is!" at which Portia stopped him, saying that the Jew should have nothing but the penalty named in the bond.

"Give me my money and I will go!" cried Shylock once more; and once more Bassanio would have given it, had not Portia again interfered. "Wait," she said; "the law hath yet another hold on you." Then she stated that, for conspiring against the life of a citizen of Venice, the law compelled him to forfeit all his own wealth, and his own life was at the mercy of the ruler of Venice. The Duke said he would grant Shylock his life, and only one half of his riches should go to the State; the other half should be Antonio's. However, Antonio, the merchant, declared he did not desire the Jew's property.

Shylock, in deep disgrace, despised by everyone, was dismissed, and the Duke bade Bassanio reward the able young counsellor who had done so much for his friend. But Portia would not take the three thousand ducats, so Bassanio besought her to say what she would accept; and she (still supposed to be herself a man) asked for the ring he wore upon his hand.

Bassanio replied he could not let that go, for his wife had given it, and he had vowed never to part with it; at which Portia pretended to be seriously affronted, and went away. Then Antonio entreated his friend to let their young counsel have the ring, because of the great service he had rendered them, and Bassanio yielded. He sent Gratiano after her with the precious ring. Nerissa had also given Gratiano a ring; and as he approached upon his master's errand, she begged it of him, and obtained it.

The two brides laughed together to think of the joke they should have against their husbands when the men returned home without the rings they had promised to keep forever; and they had not long to wait, for Bassanio soon arrived, bringing his friend Antonio. Hardly were the welcomes over when Nerissa and Gratiano were heard disputing; and asking the cause, it was said that Gratiano had carelessly given Nerissa's ring to a clerk in attendance on the young counsellor who had pleaded in the court of Venice. Then Portia, to carry out the plot, told Gratiano he was to blame; she knew her own lord Bassanio would not have parted with her ring for all the world! But Gratiano exclaimed, "My lord Bassanio did give his ring away unto the judge that begged it—and deserved it, too."

Portia pretended to be very angry, and Antonio reproached himself as the cause of her unhappiness; but she soon showed the ring, and confessed that she herself had been the young counsellor, and Nerissa the clerk, and that she had ventured

to disguise herself in order to plead the cause of their faithful friend Antonio. They were now all very happy; and Bassanio was more proud than ever of his wife, who by her wisdom and courage had saved his friend, the Merchant of Venice, from the cruel clutches of hard-hearted Shylock. —(*Adapted from Mary Seamer's version of Shakespeare's play.*)

ABOUT FANNY CROSBY

"RESCUE the perishing, care for the dying." So sang Fanny Crosby, the blind hymnist, in one of the most appealing of all the eight thousand hymns and poems she wrote during her ninety-four years of earthly existence which ended at her home in Bridgeport, Conn., ten years ago. Only a simple marker indicates the last resting place of the tired body of one who influenced the religious sentiment of the nineteenth century most profoundly. She did care, however, and most earnestly, that a home for aged people should be established in Bridgeport. So an effort is being made to fulfill her great desire to "care for the dying" in their last days.

The life of Miss Crosby, whose wish is thus to materialize, was typical of the highest and best achievements of the evangelistic faith. She was a natural versifier, writing indefatigably. She was frank in her desire to know and exchange ideas with the great. "I wanted to go with the gallant," she said, "to sit with the sincere, to associate with those who, like myself, were winning their way, in the face of the fiercest foes, seeking a truer meaning to life. Whenever an opportunity came to meet noted statesmen, masterful musicians, literary leaders and artistic mortals, I always availed myself of it. I craved for them as the hart panteth for the water-brooks."

Miss Crosby's completely trusting religious faith, strengthening a disposition which probably was naturally optimistic, made her at all times cheerful and buoyant. At the age of eight she wrote some verses ending:

"To weep and sigh because I'm blind,
I cannot, and I won't."

This dauntless facing of what in the natural course of events should not be, characterized her whole life. At the age of thirty-eight she married a blind man, Alexander VanAlstyne, but lost her child and then her husband by death. The experience of motherhood made her heart even more tender toward children, and as an old lady she said, "I always say, 'Bring the children. Aunt Fanny always has something for the children.'" She was always best known to the general public by her maiden name.

The unquestioning faith of her religious experience resulted in a serenity and peacefulness of mind which was one of the glories of her life, and the special crown of her last years.

Following are a few of the most appealing hymns written by this one blind woman: "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," "Rescue the Perishing," "Saved by Grace," "Jesus is Tenderly Calling Today," "Close to Thee," "Draw Me Nearer, Nearer," "The Bright Forever," "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour," "Open My Eyes, That I May See," "Hold Thou My Hand," "All the Way My Saviour Leads Me," "Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine," "Will Jesus Find Us Watching," "He Hideth My Soul," "To God Be the Glory," "Praise Him, Praise Him," "Nearer the Cross," "Tho' Your Sins Be as Scarlet," "Never Give Up," "Jesus Will Give You Rest," "Unsearchable Riches," "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross," "Saviour, More Than Life to Me," "We Can Only Look to Jesus," "Meet Me There," "Let the Blessed Saviour In," "Lord at Thy Mercy Seat," "There's Music in the Air," "Some Day the Silver Cord Will Break."—*Boston Transcript.*

GOD EVERYWHERE

WE pray no more, made lowly wise,
For miracle and sign;
Anoint our eyes to see within
The common, the divine.

"Lo, here! Lo, there!" no more we cry,
Dividing with our call
The mantle of Thy presence, Lord,
That, seamless, covers all.

We turn from seeking Thee afar
And in unwonted ways,
To build from out our daily lives
The temples of Thy praise.

And if Thy rarer comings, Lord,
To hearts of old were dear,
What joy should mingle with the faith
That feels Thee everywhere!

And not the less shall hearts be pure,
Nor less shall worship be,
When Thou art found in all our life,
And all our life in Thee!

—F. L. Hosmer.

ONE KIND OF MAN

He's the fellow who can always do everything much better than anybody else. He's the fellow who is always right. His radio hookup is better

than any of the hookups in the neighborhood. His boy is smarter than your boy. His wife is the best cook in the country. His house is warmer in winter, cooler in summer, than any other house he ever heard of.

His way of doing things is always the best way. He can give the minister points on theology, tell him how to preach better sermons.

This wise bird is an authority on everything. He will tell the men who paint his house how to mix their paints, and how to apply them, in spite of the fact that he has had no experience with paint. He knows more about carpenter work than men who took four years to learn their trade and have worked at it for forty. He drifts into a newspaper office occasionally, and tells the editor and the reporters just what they should do, what sort of news they should print, how they should print it. Of course he has never done newspaper work. But he's an expert just the same.

He tells his wife how to run her part of the housework. He is an expert adviser on the subject of cooking, though the only things he ever tries to cook wither, burn or fall flat. He knows just where President Coolidge errs in his messages to Congress. He could bring back prosperity to the nations of Europe if they only had the sense to ask his advice. He has a pet plan to regulate traffic that would eliminate accidents. In fact this paragon of wisdom is a great success at everything. He admits it.

The curious part of it all, however, is that he so infrequently succeeds in doing much of anything for himself or for his family. He is so deeply interested in giving expert advice and criticism on the big affairs that he has little time to devote to the business of making a good living.—*Fall River News.*

THE QUARREL OF THE AUTHORS

THE following scene may be made amusing if two boys take the parts of the conceited and quick-tempered poets. The characters belong to a time when men wore knee-breeches, and powdered their hair, and made a great point of bowing low and exchanging flowery compliments. A famous French writer, Molière, first wrote the scene as a part of one of his plays; later, it was put into English with some slight changes. Boys who take the parts should begin with the most dignified politeness and change gradually into the quarrel. The closing phrase about "hearing from" the angry poet means that the speaker intends to make the other man fight a duel with him.

(Enter Bavius and Mevius, meeting.)

- BAVIUS. Sir, I'm proud to have met you!
Long have I known
Your productions, and often I've
wished them my own.
Your verses have beauties in none
other found.
- MEVIUS. In yours all the graces of diction
abound.
- BAVIUS. Your phrases are neat, your style
charmingly light.
- MEVIUS. We find the pathetic in all that you
write.
- BAVIUS. Your odes, how delightful! how tender
and true!
Who now will compare Pope or Dryden
with you?
- MEVIUS. Your songs have a noble and elegant
vein,
That even old Horace could never
attain.
- BAVIUS. Can anything equal your love-ditties
rare!
- MEVIUS. Can aught with your wonderful son-
nets compare!
- BAVIUS. If the public could estimate half of
your worth —
- MEVIUS. If merit now met its due honors on
earth —
- BAVIUS. You'd roll through the streets in a
carriage of gold.
- MEVIUS. Every square in the city your statue
would hold.
Hem — this ballad of mine; your opin-
ion upon it. I should like to —
- BAVIUS. Pray, sir, have you met with a sonnet
On the flag of our country?
- MEVIUS. A sonnet? — Just so.
'T was read at a party, a few nights
ago.
- BAVIUS. Do you know who's the author?
- MEVIUS. I know not — nor care,
For 't is an exceedingly trifling affair.
- BAVIUS. Yet many admire it — or so they tell
me.
- MEVIUS. No matter for that; it's as bad as can
be;
And if you had but seen it, sir, you'd
think so too.
- BAVIUS. Dear sir, I am sorry to differ from you;
But I hold that its merit must every
one strike.
- MEVIUS. May the Muses preserve me from
making the like!
- BAVIUS. I maintain that a better world cannot
show;
For I am the author — yes, I, you
must know.
- MEVIUS. You?
- BAVIUS. I.

MEVIUS. Well, I wonder how that came to pass.
 BAVIUS. I had the bad luck not to please you, alas!
 MEVIUS. Perhaps there was something distracted my head;
 Or else the man spoiled it, so badly he read.
 But here is my ballad, concerning which I—
 BAVIUS. The days of the ballad methinks are gone by;
 'T is very old-fashioned, and out of date quite.
 MEVIUS. Yet, even now, many in ballads delight.
 BAVIUS. No matter; I think them decidedly flat.
 MEVIUS. You think them! Perhaps they're no worse, sir, for that!
 BAVIUS. For pedants, indeed, they have charms beyond measure.
 MEVIUS. And yet we perceive they afford *you* no pleasure.
 BAVIUS. You give others qualities found but in you.
 MEVIUS. You call others names that are justly your due.
 Go, blotter of foolscap! contemptible creature!
 BAVIUS. Go, scribbler of sonnets, and butcher of metre!
 MEVIUS. Go, impudent plagiarist! Pedant, get out!
 BAVIUS. Go, rascal! Be careful! mind what you're about!
 MEVIUS. Remember your book's insignificant sale.
 BAVIUS. Remember your bookseller driven to jail.
 MEVIUS. My pen shall avenge me—to your great disaster!
 BAVIUS. And mine shall let you know, sir, who is your master!
 MEVIUS. I defy you in verse, prose, Latin, and Greek!
 BAVIUS. You shall hear from me, sir, in the course of the week!
 —*Imitated from Molière.*

SIXTEEN RULES FOR HEALTH

As issued by a Health Extension Institute

1. VENTILATE every room you occupy.
2. Wear light-weight, loose and porous clothes.
3. Seek out-of-door occupation and recreation.
4. Sleep out of doors, if you can.
5. Avoid overeating and overweight.
6. Avoid excess of high-protein foods, such as meat, flesh-foods, eggs; also excess of salt and highly seasoned foods.

7. Eat some hard, some bulky, some raw foods daily.
8. Eat slowly and taste your food.
9. Use plenty of water internally by drinking, and externally by bathing.
10. Secure thorough elimination daily through regular movements of the bowels.
11. Stand, sit, and walk erect.
12. Do not allow poisons and infections to enter the body.
13. Keep the teeth, gums, and tongue clean.
14. Work, play, rest, and sleep in moderation.
15. Breathe deeply; take deep-breathing exercises several times a day.
16. Keep serene and whole-hearted.

LITERALLY

Old Lady (visiting States Prison)—I suppose, my poor man, it was poverty brought you to this.
 Counterfeiter—On the contrary, mum, I was just coining money.

RUSHING THE SEASONS

"HELEN dresses right up to the minute, doesn't she?"

"Away ahead of it. She wears her Easter hat in February and her summer costume at Easter."

THIS YEAR SHE MAY FOOL 'EM

"WONDER why poets and painters always represent spring as a female."

"I suppose it's because she is usually late."

ILL-ASSORTED PAIR

SAID the ink to the paper, "You look very neat; You are square and its clear that you have a 'clean sheet.'"

"It is strange," said the paper, "you cling to me then,

For your record is black—you're just out of the pen."
 —S. F. A.

FAMILIAR TOKENS

AN English school inspector wrote upon the blackboard "LXXX," and asked the children what it meant. A pretty little girl replied, "Please, sir, love and kisses."

A CRITICAL MOMENT

SHE—I noticed you hesitated when I asked you if I was the only girl you had ever loved.

He—Yes; I couldn't tell from your expression whether you wanted me to say "No" or "Yes."

THE really great are always humble.

The people who deserve to be respected are those who respect others.—*M. Farningham.*

A DAY is a short time.

Opportunities do not bide our leisure, and when past can never be recalled.

We must do the kindness while our friend is in need, for tomorrow will be too late.

—J. T. Miller.

MAY we have a joyful sense of our blessings, learn to look on the bright circumstances of our lot, and maintain a perpetual contentedness.—
Channing.

THE BETTER WAY

I WROTE down my troubles every day,
And after a few short years
When I turned to the heartaches passed away
I read them with smiles, not tears.

—John Boyle O'Reilly.

But why not write down your blessings, instead
Yes, that seems the better way—
Then you need not wait till the years have fled
You can smile this very day.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, through the exchange of letters and by gifts of books and magazines.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To give to those living far from church some of the helps which churches give. One good sermon or similar article is printed in each number. These sermons are never doctrinal, but present only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed on by all churches.

WHERE TO WRITE

1. *Letters paying for subscriptions to the paper*, fifty cents a year, should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

2. *Letters asking for correspondents, for books, magazines, cards, etc.*, also *letters offering to give books, magazines, etc.*, should be sent to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

See special suggestions under the heading of the "Book and Magazine Club" in this number.

3. *Letters asking for help in studying at home* should be sent to Mrs. George O. Sands, Brimble Ave., North Beverly, Mass.

The Home Study Committee has on hand a variety of schoolbooks which may be used by students either at home or in the schoolroom. The aim of the teachers is to help in any study where help is needed. Often this may fit a person for a higher grade of work.

4. *Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries* should be sent to Mrs. H. A. Stevens, 26 John St., Brookline, Mass.

A Circulating Library will be started in any small community needing one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references can be given. One hundred and forty-nine libraries are now on our lists.

5. The Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Miss Ethel L. Hersey, Hingham, Mass., should receive the more general correspondence from workers on the local committees, or from others interested in the organization and its methods.

Notice to those who give:—

Only books of an instructive or wholesomely amusing character should be offered. Classic, educational works, and standard novels and magazines are always acceptable.

There is a large call for scraps of calico, gingham, and percale for patchwork.

To those who receive:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one ask for money or for clothing in the columns of this paper. The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.